



BC Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Initiative

An Initiative under the Agri-Food Futures Fund



Guide to Applicants

General Program Information

The BC Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Initiative strategic goals are to:

1. Ensure there are enough workers to meet growers' production goals
2. Ensure the pool of available workers in the agriculture sector has the necessary skill sets and competencies to meet the growers' production goals
3. Ensure that growers are aware that a range of factors – not just wages – influence individuals' decisions about work, and that those factors are incorporated into production models
4. Ensure there are viable employment opportunities in the agriculture sector, and that those opportunities provide clear signals to attract potential workers into the sector
5. Ensure that growers with job vacancies in the agriculture sector can find an adequate number of workers and are able to fill job vacancies such that production is not compromised

The BC Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Initiative Strategic Plan provides the guiding direction for the BC Agriculture Labour and Skills Development Initiative (ALMSDI) and it is available at www.bcac.bc.ca.

Funding Principles for the BC Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Initiative

- > Benefits will be shared within the industry.
- > Benefits to the industry and the public will exceed the costs.
- > Initiatives will be economically viable and self-sufficient.
- > Initiatives will address specific local/provincial/regional needs or opportunities.
- > Initiatives will respect the need for equity among regions and within agricultural sectors.
- > Funding will not be ongoing but will be provided for a limited period.
- > Projects should include direct industry funding and support.
- > Funds will not be used as direct income support to individuals or firms.
- > Funds will not be used for business start-ups, expansion, capital acquisition or funding of industry group regular operations.

In accepting an application, the Management Committee undertakes to consider the application for approval but assumes no other obligation.

Unless otherwise specifically agreed to between the Applicant and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (Foundation), all applications and supporting material will be used by the Management Committee and the Foundation solely for the purpose of evaluating the application and may be disclosed, in the strictest of confidence, to Foundation advisors as part of the approval process.



Application Process

There are two approaches to address strategic initiatives

- Proactive as determined by the ALMSDI Management Committee
- Also a responsive process where self-initiated, innovative ideas from industry will be actively sought that meet the terms of the strategic plan

Eligible Applicants

Commercial and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for funding. This includes corporations, co-operatives, consortia of firms and associations, partnerships, sole proprietorships and industry associations. The applicant is the lead organization for the project. In the case of private firms, a group of firms cooperating on a project is preferred over a single private applicant.

Letter of Intent

A Letter of Intent is optional and enables the applicant to obtain the Management Committee's initial reaction to a proposed concept or project idea. It can assist applicants in obtaining helpful direction from the Committee prior to committing the resources needed for the preparation of a comprehensive application. This option will require more time overall as applying then becomes a two-stage process.

For further details on what to include in a Letter of Intent see the Letter of Intent Guidelines available on our website.

Letters of Intent are reviewed at Management Committee meetings. The ALMSDI Project Administrator contacts applicants to inform them of the decision and to discuss the guidance of the Management Committee.

Application Review Process

The Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Management Committee makes the recommendation on whether to approve or to decline funding for an application. Applications are evaluated and discussed at Committee meetings and are considered on a case-by-case basis. Each project is evaluated on its potential to help advance the goals of the BC Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Initiative's Strategic Plan.

For each project proposal received, the Administrator undertakes a preliminary project review and may contact the applicant for clarification of project details. In advance of each Management Committee meeting, committee members receive and review project proposals prior to evaluation at the committee meeting. Shortly after the meeting, the administrator will contact applicants to provide information on the committee's recommendation. Formal written notification follows at a later date by mail.

For each calendar year, deadlines for applications and letters of intent are established to provide the necessary time for an effective evaluation process. These deadlines are as follows:

- **September 15, 2004**
- **December 15, 2004**
- **March 15, 2005**
- **June 15, 2005**

The application process is as follows:

1. Letters of Intent (optional) and/or applications submitted to the BC Agriculture Council (BCAC)
 - Project Numbers assigned by ALMSDI Project Administrator

2. ALMSDI Project Administrator sends letter acknowledging receipt of application and advising applicant of expected review date.
3. Application entered into tracking log
4. Summary sheet prepared by ALMSDI Project Administrator
5. Technical review by ALMSDI Project Administrator
6. Application forwarded to Management Committee in advance of meeting with summary sheet including comments from technical review
7. Formal Review by Management Committee

Not approved

- Letter of rejection sent to applicant with reasons for funding decline
- The Management Committee may reconsider an application if there are changes to the proposal that address committee concerns and the reasons for a funding decline.

Approved

- Project specific contract developed by Project Administrator
- Letter and contract sent to applicant with conditional terms as outlined in the contract.
- Applicant returns signed contract for signature by authorized representative of ALMSDI

8. Project Commences

- Funds advanced, if required, as agreed to in the contract
- Interim reports submitted to Project Administrator
- Additional advances, if required
- Project completed
- Final report and final financial statement submitted
- Final payment made as agreed in contract.

ALMSDI Management Strategic Approach

- Coordination of an effective and efficient process
- Development of a comprehensive communication strategy with all stakeholders, and a clear process outlining representation and communication
- Provide administrative and project financing
- Development of guidelines and criteria for industry funding commitments (including in-kind) in consultation with the trustee.
- Identification of opportunities for further leveraging of industry, sponsorship and other stakeholder funding.
- Bring forth partners at all levels, through the Agricultural Labour Partnership Committee (ALPC) and other sub committees in order to avoid duplication.
- Establishment of a program operation that is open, accountable and transparent.
- Operation of the Management Committee and the Program Administrator

Project Support

The Initiative provides joint funding of eligible project cash costs. Applicants may contribute both cash and in-kind contributions.

The funding provided by the Initiative is dependent upon a number of factors such as:

- > Project cost and benefits.
- > Expected long-term industry economic benefit.
- > Extent to which benefits are shared with others in industry.
- > Degree of risk in achieving the intended results.

The Initiative has established an overall 50 percent from industry and 50 percent from the Initiative funding target over the term of the initiative. Industry in-kind contributions may be approved up to one half of the total industry contribution. Project funding levels are considered on a case-by-case basis and reflect the funding targets established for each year of the Initiative and for the overall Initiative. Table 1 (page 9) of the Strategic Plan outlines funding targets of the Initiative.

Guide for Completing the Funding Application Form

This section of the Guide to Applicants follows the order of the individual headings in the Application Form and provides general guidance for completing the application form. It is recommended that it be at hand while completing the application form.

Project Title

Clear, short title for the project proposal.

APPLICANT DESCRIPTION

Applicant Name

The organization is fully accountable for the project including project management, reporting, financial control and communications. The applicant must be a business or an association with the ability to enter into legal contractual agreements with the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (Foundation) who administers the BC Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Initiative funds. Include the name of the organization, mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, website address and business or association number.

Designated Officer

The person who is authorized to submit the application and sign agreements with the Foundation on behalf of the organization. Include designated officer's name, title, mailing address, telephone and fax numbers.

Project Contact Person

The person who actively participated in development of the application and who may be contacted by the Administrator for further information. This person will work directly with the Administrator on project reporting. Include the contact person's name, title, mailing address, telephone and fax numbers and email address.

Background Information

Include a synopsis of the applicant organization indicating the size of the membership and constituency of a non-profit organization or the size and nature of the commercial entities. Provide a listing of the current directors and executive officer.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Timing

Indicate the planned start and completion dates.

Identify if there are any major challenges to delivering the project within the planned timelines and explain how they would be addressed.

Goal

Indicate what the project will accomplish and what the result will be.

For example:

- *Increase awareness of agriculture as an attractive career option*

Context / Need

Provide an overview of the sub-sector size and the number of employers/workers benefiting from the project. Explain the specific problem, opportunity or challenge the project intends to address and why it is a priority for the development of your sector.

Briefly explain the background of the project. Identify links to an overall strategic plan for the sector, related initiatives or other previous work. Indicate the extent of industry support. Include letters of support where appropriate.

Objectives

List specific project objectives in clear, concise terms. Objectives are what you aim to achieve in the short term on the way to accomplishing your goal. Objectives must be stated in a way that clearly communicates what is to be achieved, measured or assessed.

For example:

- *Develop and deliver career awareness products with a focus on agriculture*

Project Description

Provide a brief description of the project explaining what you are going to do and how you will carry it out. This needs to provide sufficient detail in order to determine the likelihood of success of the project.

Include an overview of the key project components. Identify the major activities to be carried out for each phase and by whom. State what outputs/deliverables (i.e., actual things) will be produced by the project (e.g., educational material, conferences and seminars held etc.).

Human Resources

Briefly outline how the project will be managed and implemented. Identify participating organizations to be involved in the project and what their roles will be. If consultants are to be engaged in the project, identify the firm and the principle consultants who will work on the project.

Anticipated Results/ Benefits

Identify how the project addresses the need/opportunity of the sector or community both in the short-term and in the longer term. Be as specific as possible in identifying the anticipated results.

For example:

- *BC youth have improved understanding of agricultural career opportunities*
- *Participants attending seminars/ workshops become familiar with agricultural career paths*
- *BC agricultural producers attract more workers*

Performance Reporting & Targets

Describe how you intend to measure and report project success in achieving stated objectives and include specific numbers as targets. For some projects, collection of baseline data may need to be included as a component of the project proposal to provide a reference point from which to measure project success. Be sure to include sufficient time in your work plan to gather the information needed to measure against your short-term targets.

For example:

- *Number of organizations / individuals purchasing educational material – target 200*
- *Number of participants attending the seminars/ workshops – target 125*
- *Survey of participants to identify the level of use of the information and the resulting increase in registrations in training programs within 2 years*

Reach & Communications

Identify your intended target audiences in terms of the number of organizations/ individuals to be reached and any characteristics about this group which may make it challenging for them to be reached. Describe how and at what frequency you will communicate project progress and results to this group. For large projects, a Communications Plan may be required which you may attach as an appendix.

Other Funding Applications

If you have applied for project funding from other sources not identified in the Project Funding Plan, please identify these sources, the amount requested and for which parts of the project.

Please note that public funding from programs such as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Matching Investment Incentives program or other similar federal programs cannot be used to lever Initiative funds.

Guide for Completing the Project and Expenditures Plan Table

Templates are available on our website as a MX Excel © spreadsheet. Details for use of this template follow. To further assist you in completing this section, we have supplied an example of a completed table with the templates. We have also developed some basic tips on working in MS Excel © Spreadsheets.

This section of the application includes essential information for the evaluation of your proposal. Please complete it accurately and carefully. The Project and Expenditures Plan will be used by the Foundation to identify the timing of funds to be advanced through the contribution agreement. This detail is covered in the Project Outputs portion of the table. The project plan will also be used as the basis on which applicants report project progress. The Expenditure Area portion of the table breaks down the budget into expenditure types so that the Board can judge on the eligibility of the types of expenditures you propose to claim.

Tips for Using Application Templates on the Website

To add a row in Excel, select a row by placing your cursor immediately to the left of a row and click the mouse. The row should then be highlighted. Go to insert on the menu bar and click on rows.

To delete a row in Excel, select the row you want to delete by placing your cursor immediately to the left of a row and click on your mouse. The row should then be highlighted. Go to edit on the menu bar and click on delete.

To total columns in Excel, place your cursor in the cell where you want your total to appear and click on the auto sum key. Or, in the formula bar type in =SUM(COLUMN#ROW#:COLUMN#ROW#) e.g., =sum(E7:E16).

If you are having difficulty with these formulas look at the example excel spreadsheet. Place your cursor in a cell that has a total and refer to the formula used in the formula bar.

CONTRIBUTION SOURCES

Industry Sources

These include funds provided to the project by industry organizations, firms and through revenue generated at events or from the sale of project outputs, corporate advertising or sponsorships and from industry funds held by industry organizations.

Government Sources

These include sources of funding from programs of public institutions such as government, universities and colleges and other organizations that receive designated funding from government for assisting industry. Identify the name of the specific funding program being accessed and the Agency managing the program.

Other Sources

These include funds provided by others that are arms length from the industry benefiting such as non-profit organizations for example the Municipality of Oliver.

BC Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Initiative Request

The level of funding requested from the Initiative.

Confirmed

For each funding source listed, use a "Y" to indicate an authorized person has confirmed funding in writing. Use an "N" if funds are not yet formally confirmed.

In-kind Support

This is non-cash support provided by project participants. In-kind support is not included in the Foundation's Contribution Agreements, as we do not cost share in-kind support. You may choose to document in kind support in order to give the Board a more complete picture of the resources going into this project. Include a brief notation of the type of in-kind support with Contribution Source.

Total Project Support

The sum of total cash costs and in-kind support.

Checklist for Application Submission

Completed application package must include the following documents:

1. Application form
2. Project and Expense form
3. Project Funding Form
4. Appendices, if applicable

Please retain copies of all material submitted

Application packages may be submitted electronically or by mail to:

Agriculture Labour and Skills Development Initiative
c/o BC Agriculture Council
Contact: Steve Thomson
1473 Water Street
Kelowna, BC, V1Y 1J6
Phone: (250) 763-9790
Fax: (250) 763-9722
e-mail : steve@bcac.bc.ca
E-mail: Website: www.bcac.bc.ca